The General Election

and

TEMPERANCE LEGISLATION

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PREAMBLE

At a Conference of representatives of the Temperance Movement throughout Great Britain held at Brockley Hall, Saltburn, on the 22nd and 23rd March, 1949, it was agreed to launch a Better Britain Campaign in preparation for the coming General Election.

In this connection a Temperance Manifesto was prepared outlining those points which require immediate legislative and administrative attention and also the points on which we should question the candidates of the various parties.

The following is a copy of the Manifesto and the questions which it is recommended should be submitted to all candidates.

TEMPERANCE MANIFESTO

Positive Temperance Reform is an essential in any campaign for a Better Britain.

Events since the General Election, in 1945, have revealed the extent to which the drink evil permeates our national life.

Our economic recovery is being retarded and our plans for social security are being sabotaged by the colossal national expenditure on intoxicants.

The true facts regarding drinking are carefully hidden behind the iron curtain of officialdom.

In contrast to Government action the words of Mr. Herbert Morrison on the second reading of the Licensing Bill should be borne in mind. He said: "A diminution in the consumption of alcohol is a perfectly legitimate purpose of social policy."

How can this objective be achieved? Legislation, administration and education must all play their part.

LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Self-determination by Localities

It is impossible to have a well informed democracy without a measure of local self-control. No vested interest, no Government, central or local, has the right to impose drinking premises upon an unwilling community. The people in any ward or parish should be given the right to vote every five years on the simple issue of License or No License. This right, in principle, has already been conceded to Scotland and is long overdue for England and Wales.

Raw Materials and Liquor Manufacture

It is a deplorable, but undeniable, fact that the production of food in Britain has been sacrificed to the liquor interest. One and a half million acres of land are devoted to growing barley for the making of beer and whisky, at a time when the production from this acreage is

urgently needed for livestock purposes. Few people, perhaps, realise that the meagreness of their meat and bacon ration is largely due to the wicked and unstatesmenlike policy of giving priority to manufacturers of liquor.

The situation demands an immediate drastic cut in the allocation of cereals to brewers and distillers, and of sugar to brewers.

The Drink Habit in High Places

The trend of our political development places an ever increasing power in the hands of a few individuals. Several recent events have clearly demonstrated that able men have proved unequal to their responsibilities owing to the effect of their drinking habits on their character. It should be a matter of high public policy that no one addicted to drink should be appointed to a position of responsibility in the public service.

Drink and Public Safety

At last the verdict of science in regard to alcohol on human efficiency has been recognised by the Government in an official publication, " The Highway Code."

> " Be sure that you are fit to use the road. Alcohol, even in small amounts, lowers your alertness and sense of caution. A fraction of a second may make all the difference between safety and disaster. If you cannot give the necessary concentration you are risking not only your own life but the lives of others. Many drugs have the same effect as so also has fatigue."

But there is still a woeful failure to apply this standard to the preservation of public safety. Motorists are even yet allowed to drink before driving. There is also no prohibition against an engine driver drinking before going on duty, while it is still notorious that drinking by Air Pilots has been a contributory factor to many accidents.

It should be an elementary principle of public safety that the discipline of total abstinence for a specified period before going, and whilst on duty, should be imperative upon all engaged upon transport by Road, Rail, Sea and Air.

Liquor Advertising

The last Royal Commission on Licensing stigmatized much of the drink advertising as containing "palpable, scientific untruths." No self-respecting and enlightened democracy ought to tolerate the display, either by press or poster, of advertisements designed to extend the drink habit.

Reduction of Licenses

Many areas are grossly over-licensed, but so far many Licensing Courts have shown little or no disposition to remedy this grave social problem. The appropriate Secretary of State should take the defaulting Licensing Authorities to task and insist upon them carrying out their duties in a proper manner in the public interest.

Clubs

The more effective control of Clubs as recommended in the Report of the Royal Commission on Licensing is a legislative reform which is long overdue. Clubs which have no recreational or cultural background, and which are used mainly for drinking purposes ought not to be tolerated in any well-ordered community. At the present time these drinking clubs have all the facilities and privileges (for example, protection from police inspection) which were intended for bona-fide clubs.

EDUCATION

Children and Adolescents

Although eighteen years have elapsed since the Royal Commission recommended that "every child ought to receive specific and systematic instruction as to the properties of alcohol, as in all other matters which may affect future health, so that the child may at least be in possession of sound material on which to form a personal judgment when years of discretion are reached," nothing has been done to implement this desirable recommendation. It is an astounding fact that "Mass Observation" after a survey reported that only four per cent. of children had any recollection of hearing the subject mentioned during their school career.

The Minister of Education should insist that Inspectors systematically examine children in order to ascertain that the syllabus of "Hygiene of Food and Drink" is regularly and effectively taught.

Right use of Leisure

The true standard of living in a community is very largely determined by the way in which the people spend their leisure hours. The social centre of the community ought not to be the premises where intoxicants are available. The tendency to substitute the public house for the home is to be strongly condemned. In view of the shorter working week, and the increase of leisure time available, local authorities should address themselves to the establishment of attractive community centres, open to citizens of all ages, and therefore free from intoxicants.

National Income and Drink Expenditure

A high standard of social life can only be attained where families observe a rational standard of expenditure. At the present time according to official returns in 1948 expenditure was as follows:—

Rent and Rates	£598,000,000
Clothing	£685,000,000
Food (including milk and non-alcoholic beverages) ...	£2,181,000,000
Intoxicants	£762,000,000

The proportion of the family income spent on intoxicants is tending to increase year by year to the detriment of all social standards. It is known that children's allowances are in some cases being diverted to the public house.

All the methods available for Adult Education should be employed to encourage wise spending and to discourage expenditure on intoxicants.

The Conference at Saltburn passed the following resolution on

" THE TREND OF LIQUOR LEGISLATION "

" This Conference affirms its opposition to the liquor traffic in any form, whether under public or private ownership, and regards it as an exploitation of human weakness and a source of social evil felt in every department of public life.

The Conference would therefore support any legislation or administrative action designed to lessen the manufacture and consumption of intoxicants and to restrict drinking facilities.

This Conference further affirms that any comprehensive legislation dealing with the liquor traffic should contain the following provisions:—

(1) The reduction of the supply of raw materials to the drink trade.

(2) The right of self-determination by localities popularly known as local option.

(3) The prohibition of drink advertisements.

(4) The more effective control of registered clubs.

(5) Abstinence for a specified period of all engaged in transport by road, rail, sea and air."

QUESTIONNAIRE

(To be submitted to Parliamentary Candidates)

(1) If elected would you press for the reduction of the supply of raw materials to the Drink Trade and the prohibition of advertisements designed to increase the drinking of intoxicants?

(2) Would you support a measure conferring upon localities the right of self-determination in respect of drinking facilities?

(3) If returned to Parliament would you support a measure to bring registered clubs under effective control?

(4) In view of the scientific finding embodied in the Highway Code regarding the effect of alcohol even in small amounts, would you, in the interest of public safety, vote for legislation which would make it a statutory offence for any person engaged in any form of transport to drink intoxicants during a specified period before going and whilst on duty?

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